

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
Draft

Summary of August 24, 2015 Meeting
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Azalea Conference Room

Members Present: Scott Dicke, Mike Hanna, Claire O'Dea, Christine Ng, Noor Khalidi, Alex Sanders, Sarah Meservey, Gabriel Thoumi, Patrick Kenney, Irwin Kim

Members Absent: Kari Klaus, John Seymour

Guests: Sandra Hagen (Heery), Andrea Swiatocha (HCM)

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss (DES), Ajibola Robinson (APS), Shani Kruljac (DES)

1. Public comment

2. Solid Waste Update – Zero Waste and Curbside Composting

Shani Kruljac from the Department of Environmental Services provided an update on curbside composting and the County's Zero Waste goal.

Shani noted that the Board approved the implementation of a curbside yard waste composting program and an associated increase in residential fees. After approval the losing bidder brought a legal challenge to the County over the decision. This legal challenge delayed implementation of the program and American Disposal was decided upon as the emergency temporary hauler until the dispute was resolved. American Disposal was also the winning bidder for the waste contract and curbside composting program.

A curbside composting program may be incorporated in the 4th quarter of the year. Ms. Kruljac noted that staff sees this element of the waste program as critical to a more sustainable comprehensive County waste management strategy. Christine asked about the cost of actual composting that includes food. Shani noted that the infrastructure is not in place to handle that and at present no program for food is being proposed. Other companies in the region are either accepting yard waste or food waste, but not both.

Alex asked for clarification about the County's current yard waste collection. A spring collection occurs for 6 weeks that includes free bags for residents. In the fall, vacuuming happens and bags are available to residents. Shani also noted that the County will pick up brush and limbs up to four feet in length when called by 6am on their trash day.

Mike Hanna asked if the year round composting would still include leaf vacuuming. Shani explained that the County recycles 100% of leaves it takes and needs that mulch for County and resident uses. Shani expects that leaf vacuuming and spring bags will still be part of the County program for yard waste. Mike asked for clarity on cost. Shani noted that it would cost \$34 more per household per year to include composting. There is a cost for carts and cart maintenance too. However, staff is currently maintaining the carts and would therefore free up those FTEs and funds for other uses under a new contract. The new contract would include cart maintenance by the hauler.

Alex asked what issues will be resolved by a curbside composting program. Shani noted that grass cycling and composting are key to prevent illegal dumping as well as grass clippings from being burned at the waste-to-energy facility. She noted that about 9,000 tons of yard waste have been identified as being removable from the waste stream.

Gabriel asked what the County resident waste costs are and will be and how they compare to neighboring jurisdictions. Shani noted that Arlington will still have the cheapest rates in the region.

Currently the County waste rate is \$271 per household. The new proposed rate without yard waste is \$256.

Sarah asked what the legal issue was that prevented implementation of the curbside program. Shani noted that it was a separate issue that was thrown out of court recently. The issues were brought by the contractor that lost the bid, and they were not pleased with the selection process. Their lawsuit delayed implementation.

Mike asked what the greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts are from more trucks with a curbside composting program and the loss of fuel to the waste-to-energy facility. She did not have GHG numbers but noted that this was very important to take action on from a comprehensive waste management strategy. It is important to use the resources correctly. Shani noted that there will be less grass and organic materials burned. She noted that burning yard waste was not the highest and best use for the organic material.

Shani also provided an update on the Zero Waste goal for the County. She clarified that zero waste is equal to a 90% reduction. Staff has been tasked to draft a zero waste proclamation. Board members are still weighing financial impacts. The solid waste plan is already in place and is a 20 year plan that was drafted in 2004. The zero waste plan is envisioned as the successor to the existing solid waste plan.

Shani agreed to share information with the Commission as the process unfolds.

Lastly, Shani noted that County facilities received new recycling bins. The changes are being taken to simplify waste disposal at County facilities and create consistent bins. She also noted that the detention facility will be receiving new small trashcans that are slightly larger than a Nalgene container and a full size recycling bin to promote recycling practices. She noted that the Sheriff is fully in support of sustainable action at the jail. This solid waste action is in addition to the already successful composting program at the detention facility.

The Commission discussed solid waste issues and the action of going to the Board for implementation of a curbside composting program. The Commission was in support of the curbside program and made a motion to draft a letter to the Board. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Abingdon Elementary Letter Review

The letter was approved unanimously as amended.

4. Envision Courthouse Letter

The letter was approved unanimously as amended.

5. Affordable Housing Letter

The letter was approved unanimously as amended.

6. Meeting Summary Review – July 2015

Approved unanimously as amended.

7. Old/New Business

Alex Sanders attended the Fire Station #8 (FS#8) relocation meeting at Langston-Brown Community Center on July 30. He provided an update to the Commission from that meeting. He noted that he has never seen a public meeting in Arlington (aside from election related gatherings) so well-attended. He noted about 150 residents in attendance. Mr. Sanders expressed to the Commission that there was passionate support among the audience to keep FS#8 at its present site. This issue is very personal to many neighbors as FS #8 is a symbol of neighborhood pride and cohesion. Mr. Sanders noted that possible Commission involvement would hinge on the environmental impact of a new FS #8. The County is considering 7 alternatives, including the site they heard about from

the ODCA. The County's first assessment of the sites includes evaluation of whether the site is within a RPA and if the construction can remain outside of the RPA. At first glance, all 7 alternatives meet this test.

Mike Hanna asked what evaluation criteria the County was using to compare the sites. He suggested that if E2C2 wishes to investigate this further, he recommend that they contact County staff for further information on the possible sites. Mr. Hanna expressed that this is an opportunity for the Commission to have some involvement or at least corporate awareness of the selection process and criteria.

The Commission agreed that this will eventually come before them and whichever neighborhood is impacted, E2C2 is going to hear about the environmental damage to the chosen site. The Commission is looking into what other sites would be impacted and what environmental criteria should be addressed beyond the RPA. Tree and wildlife impacts were the initial impacts noted by the Commission of interest.

The Commission discussed writing letters with one person drafting and another editing. This would allow more focused writing before group edits. The Commission also agreed to submit edits to meeting minutes prior to monthly meetings to reduce the time spent on edits in person.